

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

*Worshipping Together* is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. [frankston.rpca.org.au](http://frankston.rpca.org.au) [bit.ly/WTrpcaf](http://bit.ly/WTrpcaf)

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. [airdrierpcs.org](http://airdrierpcs.org)

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. [bit.ly/WkBbl](http://bit.ly/WkBbl) or [bit.ly/3yrBbl](http://bit.ly/3yrBbl)

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on 1-2 Thessalonians by John Calvin, Matthew Henry, and William Hendriksen.

# Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

*The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.*



*If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men\* should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father\* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

*Read, pray, repeat.*

\* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested a godly mother will lead her children

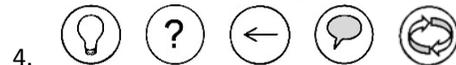
**Reading** 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5 Establishing and Encouraging

**Notes** Paul's letter to the Thessalonians is likely one of his earliest letters – sent to this church which God used him to start, but which he had to leave due to Jewish persecution. (Acts 17:1-9) He felt orphaned from these Christians and had been hindered (2:18) from coming to see them, so he sent Timothy – his son in the faith on his first ministerial assignment to them.

As Timothy returned to Paul and gave his report (Acts 18:5), Paul writes this letter to them, likely when he continued his ministry in Corinth. The tone of the letter was, *"You're doing fine, continue to do so more and more (cf. 1 Thess. 4:1). Do not let persecutions get you down. These are necessary; also, they are to be expected, just as I told you when I was still with you (cf. 1 Thess. 3:2-4)."* (Hendriksen)

Timothy had come to help the church stand upright and firm and also to come alongside them to encourage them in their faith. They needed that so that they would not be shaken by afflictions and be tempted and fall into sin. What afflictions and temptations are your fellow Church members facing? Do you know? How are you helping them stand firm? How are you encouraging others in your church?

- Questions**
1. Why had Paul written the Thessalonians?
  2. How can you help other Christians stand firm?
  3. How can you encourage other Christians?



- Praise** Psalm 54b<sup>2</sup>
- Pray**
1. Commit you and your family in prayer to establishing and encouraging others in your church, by God's help
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

<sup>1</sup> You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord's Day you review the previous week's readings and/or the previous or current week's sermons and pray together

<sup>2</sup> Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

**Reading** 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Ignorance is not bliss

**Notes** When it comes to understanding death and eternity ignorance is not bliss. Yet we are surrounded by ignorance – and even inclined to it ourselves about these important things. People often say about the death of a loved one, "They are better off now." Yet that is true only for a Christian! On the other hand some say death is simply the end of existence – another lie. For the Thessalonian church, they knew the promise of Christ's second coming and were afraid that some would miss it.

So, Paul writes to instruct them – and us – about death and eternity, so we will have hope even in our sorrow. What happens when a Christian dies? You go to sleep. WLC 37. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? The souls of believers are, at their death, made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves until the resurrection. And, you will rise again. Death is not the end. Death is a defeated enemy.*

How do we know? Jesus rose from the dead. Death has no more power over him or over those who are His. God, who not only never *does* lie, but never *can* lie, promised to raise us in Jesus.

The Bible doesn't tell all the details, but we know that Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout. The dead will rise first in glorified bodies. Then all Christians still alive will rise up in the air and we will all be with the Lord forever. Comfort and be comforted.

- Questions**
1. What are some of the ignorant things people say about death?
  2. What happens when a Christian dies?
  3. What will happen to all Christians at the return of Jesus?



- Praise** Psalm 54b
- Pray**
1. Rejoice with your family that Jesus will raise His people up
  2. Pray for your family
  3. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
  4. Pray for the reading and preaching of God's word tomorrow

**Reading** 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12 5 steps to a satisfied life

**Notes** Sometimes we find books or articles that give 3 (or 5 or 20...) easy steps to accomplish something. We have here 5 steps. But rather than call them easy, we might better describe them as “5 difficult steps” – or “5 impossible steps.” Yet for the Christian, though these may be difficult, they are not impossible because Christ died so that we might do them and God teaches us how.

Love each other. You are already doing it, Paul writes. You love each other – and other Christians too. Keep increasing in this love.

Try to be quiet. Don’t say so much, live a quiet life, don’t be the one always talking, always at the centre of attention. People ought not think of you as a clanging gong or a noisy symbol

MYOB. Mind your own business. Don’t be a busybody (2 Thess 3:11) – taking charge of others when God has not given you that responsibility. Be busy at what God has given you to do.

Work with your hands. Don’t be afraid to get them dirty. Don’t be lazy. Work hard, knowing your labour in the Lord is never in vain. (1 Cor. 15:58)

Walk properly toward unbelievers. This 5<sup>th</sup> step is both a command and a result of obedience to the previous four steps. Let outsiders see your good works and glorify your Father.

Five steps. Not easy, but steps by which God makes you satisfied with the labour of your hands and your love for one another.

- Questions**
1. What are these five steps to a satisfied life?
  2. Which steps are especially hard for you?
  3. How is God glorified as you do these things?



- Praise Pray**
- Psalm 54b
1. Pray with your family you’ll be diligent to His glory
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** 1 Thessalonians 3:6-10 Good News

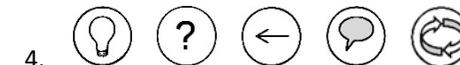
**Notes** What an encouragement good news is – especially when we are not sure the news will be good. Timothy brought such encouragement to Paul. Although “good news” in the New Testament is usually the gospel itself, here, the good news is the effects of the gospel in the lives of the church.

Timothy brought Paul good news of the faith of the Thessalonians. They were not shaken and fallen, not straying into temptation, but standing firm, standing fast in the Lord. He also brought good news of their love – their love for Christ as evident in their lives, their love for the gospel (by which they were saved and by which they live) and their love for the ministers of the gospel (they too longed to see Paul).

This report led to Paul’s thanksgiving and rejoicing. As Paul did in nearly all of his letters, he gives thanks to God for them. And he rejoices for their sake – not just personal joy, (“I’m so happy that my ministry with them was successful”) but joy for them (“I’m so happy that they have the joy of walking with Christ”) This report “put new life and spirit into the apostle and made him vigorous and active in the work of the Lord.” (Henry)

What would be the news of your Christian life? How is the gospel’s effect in your life causing others to rejoice and thank God?

- Questions**
1. What is the good news Timothy brings to Paul?
  2. What was Paul’s response to this good news?
  3. How can our faith and life in Christ encourage others?



- Praise Pray**
- Psalm 54b
1. Rejoice with your family in prayer for the effects of the gospel on others in your church.
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 Pray for the church

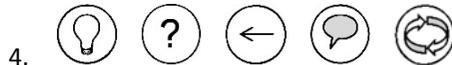
**Notes** How can we pray for each other in the church? Do you at times run out of words? Here we have a Spirit inspired prayer for other Christians that we can pray as Paul did for the Thessalonians.

Paul prayed that he could be with the Church in Thessalonica. Even though the report of their faith is encouraging, Paul desires “to supply what is still lacking.” (Hendriksen) He desired to see them face to face so he prayed for God to direct his steps. Paul was separated from these Christians, but even in a local church it’s too easy to be distant. Pray you will be able to spend time with each other to strengthen your Christian lives together.

Then Paul prayed that the church would increase and abound in love – that they would have more and more love for each other – and then more and more! Might it be that we desire to be caught up in the Christian love of one another – to have as our measure – just a bit more. Notice the first priority is to the local church – “to one another”, then to the wider Christian body – “and to all.”

Finally he prays for the church to be perfect – blameless in holiness. We long for the coming of Christ when we will be blameless through and through (5:23) yet we pray and strive for the increase of love which is a measure of the increase of holiness in ourselves and in one another now.

- Questions**
1. Why does Paul pray to be with these Christians?
  2. What is the measure of love for which Paul prays for them?
  3. What is the measure of holiness for which he prays for them?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 54b
1. Commit yourself and your family to pray for each other in your church, with God’s help.
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

**Reading** 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 God’s Will – Your Purity

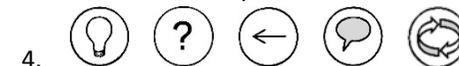
**Notes** What is God’s will for your life? This is a question asked often by sincere Christians. Sometimes we want a special word of knowledge, or seek to imitate “Gideon’s fleece.” (Judges 6:36-40) Yet here we have both a general and a specific statement of God’s will for His church. Paul writes both pleading and commanding. He writes as one who is called to obey this command of the Lord himself and to pass on the command to others.

The general statement of God’s will is to abound more and more. Just as the standard of love for each other is “more and more” so the standard of holiness for Christians is “more and more.” We never arrive, in this life. We are always striving for holiness. (Heb. 12:14) 3. Even the most holy Christians are far, far from God’s standard. So we seek to “overflow the measure.”

The specific statement of God’s will is to abstain from sexual immorality. The word Paul uses is where we get our English word pornography. This pervades our society and culture – in TV, movies, books, magazines, and internet. But it ought not to pervade us! God’s will is that we control our body. What the world says is normal, God says is passion of lust. What the world says give in to, God says, control. What the world says is free expression, God says is cheating one another.

We’re not alone in the battle for purity. God has given us the Holy Spirit so we will, in Him, understand and do God’s will.

- Questions**
1. What is the general statement of God’s will Paul gives?
  2. What is the specific statement of God’s will Paul gives?
  3. How can we be pure?



- Praise Pray** Psalm 54b
1. Pray that you and your family will be sexually pure
  2. Pray for a member of your church
  3. Pray for your family
  4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member